

REMARKS

Status of Claims

Claims 10-27 are pending, of which claims 1 and 21 are independent.

Claim 10 has been amended to correct informalities in the claim language and to more clearly define the claimed subject matter. New claims 20-27 have been added. Support for the amendments and the new claims is found, for example, at page 6, lines 15-21; page 12, lines 22-24; page 14, line 6; page 15, line 8; page 18, lines 8-16; FIG. 3A and the corresponding description in the specification, and claims 12-16. No new matter has been introduced.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 10, 11, 14, 16 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicants' Admitted Prior Art (AAPA). Claims 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Tanji (US 2001/0013269). Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable AAPA in view of Millikan et al. (US 2003/0210617). Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable AAPA in view of Fontijn (US 2006/0013088). Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable AAPA in view of Fontijn and further in view of Suzuki (US 2002/0012297). These rejections are traversed for at least the following reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that, at a minimum, none of the cited references disclose or suggest *“a management information storing step of sequentially storing pieces of read management information and storing **specifying information** specifying a storage location of each of the pieces of read management information into the management information area of the storage unit”* and *“data length of each piece of management information stored in the*

management information area of the storage unit [being] variable according to an amount of information included in each piece of management information” as recited by amended claim 10.

In the conventional data storage method, as shown in FIGS. 7-12B and the corresponding description of the present disclosure, each piece of the management information stored in the storage unit has a fixed data length. For example, the file name (i.e., management information) is stored in each file name area having a fixed-length (see, FIG. 11 and page 28, lines 4-7 of the present disclosure). Also, it is noted that since the data length of each management information is the same (i.e., fixed), the storage location of each piece of the management information is known. Thus, in the conventional method, while the file name and start and end address of the audio data are stored, there is no need to store any information specifying the location of each piece of the management information stored in the storage unit. However, in this conventional method, the unused and wasted areas of the management information area exist depending on the length of the file name (see, blackened boxes of FIG. 11).

In contrast, in the present subject matter, *the data length of each piece of management information* stored in the management information area of the storage unit is *variable* according to an amount of information included in each piece of management information. Thus, as shown in FIG. 3B of the present disclosure, the unused and wasted area in the management information area can be reduced or eliminated (no blackened box in FIG. 3B). Further, as the data length is variable, the present subject matter stores *specifying information* specifying a storage location of each of the pieces of read management information into the management information area of the storage unit. It is submitted that AAPA does not disclose these features of amended claim 10.

Applicants also submit that FIGS. 12A and 12B do not illustrate that the data length of *each piece* of the management information is variable. FIGS. 12A and 12B illustrate the

problems which occur when the total size of the file management area increased by, for example, increasing the fixed-length of each piece of the management information or increasing the maximum number of the pieces of the management information. In FIGS. 12A and 12B, however, the data for each piece of the management information has a fixed-length.

As such, it is clear that, at a minimum, AAPA fails to disclose the use of variable data length of each piece of the stored management information and specifying information specifying a storage location of each of the pieces of read management information, as recited by claim 10.

It is also clear that other cited references, Tanji, Millikan, Fontijn and Suzuki, fail to cure these deficiencies of AAPA. Tanji appears to disclose storing song management data, but it is clear that each of the song management data (86-1, 86-2 in FIG. 1 of Tanji) has a fixed capacity, i.e., a fixed data length.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 10 and all dependent claims thereon are patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons set forth above. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of claims 10-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

New Claims

Since new claim 20 depends upon claim 10, this claim is patentable over the cited references for at least the same reasons as claim 10.

Similar to claim 10, new independent claim 21 recites, among other features, “*a management information storing step of sequentially storing pieces of read management information and storing specifying information specifying a storage location of each of the*

*pieces of read management information into the management information area of the storage unit” and “data length of each piece of management information stored in the management information area of the storage unit [being] **variable** according to an amount of information included in each piece of management information.” Thus, claim 21 and all claims dependent thereon are patentable over the cited references for at least the same reasons as claim 10.*

CONCLUSION

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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